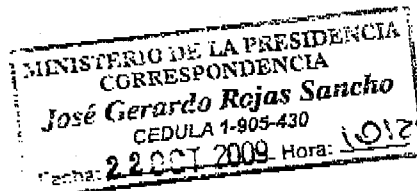


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16 October 2009

The Honorable Oscar Arias
President of Costa Rica
Casa Presidencial
S.O.
San Jose, Costa Rica



Dear President Arias:

I want to thank you for your eloquent speech at the United Nations in New York on Tuesday, September 22, 2009, about the need for action on global warming, the single-most pressing global issue that threatens human communities and the natural world. Clearly, your remarks were based on the best knowledge available from the scientific and conservation community.

However, I do not understand why you have not applied this same science-based approach to decisions your administration is taking on the protection of Las Baulas National Park.

I am aware that you have already heard from some of the world's best scientists, some of the world's most influential conservation organizations and thousands and thousands of Costa Rica citizens as well as concerned people from around the world calling on you and your majority party in the Costa Rican Congress to increase, not decrease, protections for Las Baulas National Park. This park is the world's most important nesting site in the Eastern Pacific for critically endangered leatherback turtles. Enclosed with this letter are postcards and petitions from thousands more concerned citizens around the world.

It was reported in TIME Magazine on October 10, 2009, that you are interested in a global leadership role on climate change, yet your administration is pushing to allow development directly behind the current nesting sites for leatherback turtles, which is contrary to good climate change and conservation policy.

As sea levels rise, sea turtle nesting beaches will be flooded and the turtles will have to find nesting sites further inland from today's shoreline. Your proposed legislation will doom these turtles ability to adapt to inevitable changes that will be caused by sea level rise if this zone is developed for human habitation.

Even if some of the most endangered turtles in the world didn't nest in this zone, this proposed action would be contrary to prudent regulation by any nation seriously contemplating adapting to the inevitable changes that global climate change will bring. Sea rise is inevitable and is occurring and will continue to occur—even if we could immediately eliminate all new sources of global warming gasses.

We ask you to withdraw your Party's proposal and join with the world that is trying desperately to rescue this magnificent species from extinction. In so doing, you would simultaneously be showing the world that you as President, are moving forward with policies that address not only ways to curb the causes of global warming, but also the inevitable impacts that the best scientists already predict will become a reality in the few decades.

Failure to act will call into question your ability to assume global leadership role on climate change.

Sincerely yours,



Todd Steiner
Executive Director

Encl.